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ABSTRACT

This paper describes some of the tools that The Regeneration Project, in Emmaus, Pennsylvania, has developed for use in the process of local economic improvement. One or more of these may be of interest to other individuals in communities that wish to undertake similar projects. Regenerative development provides markets for locally produced goods and services by pinpointing nearby purchasers of a particular product. It includes assessing potential buyers' willingness to purchase locally, size of potential sales, and other relevant factors. The increased market opportunities generate additional revenues and employment, with multiplier effects throughout the local economy. The document presents 15 "Tools for Regeneration," designed to measure the potential for local markets to bring about regeneration. The tools include: Workshops and Seminars, Home Market Search, Local Economy Inventory, AgMarket Search, Farmer Search, Vitality Index, Regenerative Index, Natural Resources Inventory, Human Resources Inventory, Import/Export Inventory, Agricultural Production and Food Processing Inventory, Regenerative Technology Inventory, Energy Search, Wellness Search, and Health Network Inventory. The document describes each of these tools in some detail. A "search" indicates a survey of cooperative business providers and consumers while an "inventory" suggests a listing of possible resources. (TES)

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TOOLS FOR REGENERATION

Specific Ways to Help an Economy Thrive

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Preface

This paper describes some of the tools that The Regeneration Project has developed for use in the process of local economic improvement. One or more of these may be of interest to you, and of great value to your community. The Regeneration Project seeks to establish partnerships with others to implement the concepts and tools of regeneration. Please contact us for further information.

INTRODUCTION

REGENERATION: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS IF PEOPLE AND VITALITY MATTERED

Communities throughout the world are finding themselves increasingly disillusioned and disappointed by economic and community development plans that have not worked, or worked only at tremendous costs in terms of people, economic, natural, and material resources. Few systemic, sustainable solutions or methods for arriving at solutions are being offered by planners or policymakers at the federal, state, regional, or local level.

On the other hand, there is a tremendous resource and opportunity facing America. It is the promise of regeneration. Regenerative economic development is the building of a local economy from local resources, businesses and markets. This process can take place without infusions of outside federal or state financial assistance. Instead, the local marketplace and community wherewithal provide the motive power for this economic development.

How Does It Work?

Regenerative development provides additional markets for locally produced goods and services by pinpointing nearby purchasers of a particular product and assessing their willingness to purchase locally, the quantity they would purchase, and other relevant factors. Through these increased market opportunities, additional revenues and employment are

generated and multiplier effects are felt throughout the local economy.

Given new information about local resources, manufacturing capabilities, resource use and need, imports, and technological options within the scope of a regenerative development project, the community would increase control over its economic well-being, and local businesses would have more opportunities and employment potential. As the process of local regeneration takes hold, resource efficiency, self-reliance and economic vitality increase.

Making It Work

Setting in motion the process of regeneration in an area can be facilitated by the use of a number of "tools." These tools will be of value to many people -- policy makers, government representatives, local officials and community leaders, planners, development bankers, entrepreneurs, citizens, and established businesses. They have been designed to measure the level of, the potential for, and the activities for bringing about, regeneration through the mechanism of the local market. These tools are presented on the following pages.

TOOLS FOR REGENERATION

Specific Ways to Help a Local Economy Thrive

WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS

--The first of a series of steps to set in motion the process of regeneration.--

HOME MARKET SEARCH

--Opens up new opportunities for local businesses in tapping home-centered markets--

LOCAL ECONOMY INVENTORY

--Helps create new markets and linkages between business in the local economy--

AgMARKET SEARCH

--Brings increased vitality to the regional farming community by identifying new local markets for farm products--

FARMER SEARCH

--Identifies farmers who are willing to provide for local markets to revitalize regional economies--

VITALITY INDEX

--Measures local or regional economic health and illustrates the potential for self-reliant growth--

REGENERATIVE INDEX

--Measures actions occuring in an area that contribute to regeneration--

NATURAL RESOURCES INVENTORY

--Comprehensively identifies natural resources in a given region--

HUMAN RESOURCES INVENTORY

--Indentifies human skills, and resources in a given region--

IMPORT/EXPORT INVENTORY

--Identifies all imports and exports for an area--

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND FOOD PROCESSING INVENTORY

--Identifies crops and livestock produced and capacity for additional production--

REGENERATIVE TECHNOLOGY INVENTORY

--Identifies locally available and useful regenerative technology--

ENERGY SEARCH

--Identifies markets for products and services which conserve and generate energy--

WELLNESS SEARCH

--Locates markets for preventive health care products and services--

HEALTH NETWORK INVENTORY

-- Identifies people and groups within the community who can serve as health "lay healers" --

Workshops, Seminars

To begin the process of regeneration, and to introduce or transfer the concepts and tools of regeneration to those who will be involved, workshops are offered on regeneration, a series of tools, or any specific tool. Workshops may include an overview, case studies, audio-visuals, demonstrations, hands-on experience, or training. The workshops and seminars are tailored to meet the individual needs of a particular group of people and their region.

Home Market Search

Acquiring, maintaining, and improving our homes provide a substantial income potential for local businesses and industries. Home Market Search locates untapped local markets centered on the home. A few examples would be home improvement, new home construction, energy conservation, greenhouse or solar energy additions, gardening and landscaping, and day care services. Given that the market in home improvements is huge -- $38 billion in the U.S. -- any help in locating or pinpointing this market in an area would be of immense use to local businesses engaged in selling products or services in this area. Home Market Search would help define service and manufacturing needs in the local housing market, which in turn would lead to new and expanded employment and a vital local housing industry.

Local Economy Inventory

The Local Economy Inventory serves to match local businesses with local suppliers in order to replace costly imports coming into a region. It comprehensively surveys all enterprises and institutions in a region. It covers both primary and secondary material inputs as well as waste products that may have potential economic value.

Included in this survey will be manufacturers, service companies, nonprofit organizations, and local governmental agencies. This inventory has the potential for significantly increasing the vitality of a local economy. It will put local product and supply information at the tips of a business person's fingers. For instance, a similar effort in Lane County, Oregon, has increased local sales by millions of dollars. Their "Buy Oregon" program has matched up local or regional businesses (that were previously buying goods or services from hundreds of miles away) with suppliers virtually in their own backyards. This has led to steady improvement in the economic health of Lane County businesses and residents alike. The Local Economy Inventory goes even further by reaching institutional purchasers and by exploring how wealth could be generated from materials previously regarded as waste. This inventory can translate into lower costs through import-substitution, and into new enterprise creation through a dynamic awareness of how the local economy works.

AgMarket Search

Each year, bulk food buyers in a given area purchase thousands of pounds of meat, fruit, vegetables, grains, and dairy products to supply the area's schools, cafeterias, hospitals, and restaurants. Frequently, these foods are shipped from farms hundreds, even thousands, of miles away, even though farmers in the area can produce the same commodities. AgMarket Search is a computer survey that tabulates the amount of regionally-grown farm products that bulk food buyers in the area would be willing to purchase. These would be commodities that are now purchased from outside the region but which could be grown locally. Given that some regions import up to 90 percent of their food -- at an annual dollar loss in the millions -- any increase in the amount of food produced and marketed within a region will cut down on this huge dollar drain, as well as keep more farmers in business, and enrich the entire area.

A community would reap many benefits from AgMarket Search. First, the regional agricultural community would be strengthened by learning about new, nearby, stable markets. A more diverse market and more diverse crop production system would reduce risks taken by local farmers. Residents would benefit from fresher and thereby more nutritious foodstuffs. Food costs could be lower due to the elimination of expensive transportation costs. Finally, there could be new job and business opportunities in providing supplies for increased farmwork and in the distributing and processing of foods locally. An AgMarket Search done for the Southern Alleghenies Regional Planning Commission in Pennsylvania revealed an untapped $43 million market for locally grown foods.

Farmer Search

The Farmer Search is a "companion" survey to AgMarket Search. It involves a survey of all food producers in an area. The survey would ask detailed questions concerning the quantitites of the different commodities produced and how much is available for local purchase. Other questions would determine the marketing method, i.e., roadside stand, pick-your-own, the location and hours of operation, etc. The end result would be a directory of producers for a region which would aid consumers as well as bulk buyers in purchasing local foodstuffs and supporting local food production.

Vitality Index

The Vitality Index measures the potential by which a community could expand its local markets and its resource and business capacities. It does this by establishing the extent to which a region provides for its own food, housing, energy and other vital necessities. These figures are then compared to what residents in the established zone could actually provide for

themselves. The Index makes use of existing publicly available data as much as possible. Its results are then a handy guide for business leaders, entrepreneurs or governmental officials on exactly where new business opportunities exist for meeting local market needs with local resources.

The Vitality Index is not intended to promote economic self-sufficiency, but to point out opportunities for reaching the highest possible level of economic self-reliance. The principal benefit of the Vitality Index, therefore, is that it acts as a comprehensive, yet succinct, quantitative summary of your local or regional economy. This summary will be a touchstone for identifying specific areas in which enterprises can grow. As a measure of local economic health, it could be calculated on a periodic basis. Economic improvement and greater self-reliance would witness a rise in this index over time.

Regenerative Index

The Regenerative Index measures and examines actions, activities, and functions occurring in an area that contribute to regeneration. It will measure the factors that cause the Vitality Index to rise or fall. The Regenerative Index will quantify to what extent regeneration is taking place. It will measure the number of people, businesses, industries, etc. practicing regenerative techniques and methods, and using regenerative technologies. An example is the percent of farmers in an area who are farming in resource efficient ways, or the percent of businesses in the region which are producing goods or providing services for local consumption. As these regenerative activities increase, the index will increase.

Natural Resources Inventory

This is a comprehensive accounting of natural resources in an area or zone. The list would include minerals, forests, water resources, and any unusual or economically important flora and fauna. This provides a list of materials which could substitute for imports from outside the area, and which could provide raw materials for further processing.

Human Resources Inventory

This is a thorough documentation of the population in a given region. It would include age, sex, educational background, employment status, level of self-reliance in food, shelter, and health and other demographic characteristics. This inventory would help demonstrate to individuals and the community the potential for utilizing local human resources and capacities more creatively and in a manner which would enhance the quality of their lives.

Import/Export Inventory

This is an examination of all imports and exports for an area, from food to appliances, fertilizers, and energy. The purpose is to help locate those items which have the potential to be produced locally with local resources.

Agricultural Production and Food Processing Inventory

This is a survey of all crops and livestock produced in the area and the amount of land available for crops, grazing, forests, etc. The inventory would include any food processing industry in the area and would point out areas where additional crops could be produced or grown to meet the needs of food processors and consumers.

Regenerative Technology Inventory

This is a listing of all technologies which are regenerative and actively utilized in the area. Along with this would be a comparable list of technology which could be used in the area, either to substitute for a technology which is not regenerative, or to inititate new business ventures. The technologies listed will be regenerative and appropriately scaled to meet local needs using local resources.

Energy Search

An Energy Market Search will locate and identify the market for services and products which conserve and generate energy. This search would consist of two components -- the residential market and the industrial/business/commercial market. An Energy Search directed at the homeowner could be incorporated into the Home Market Search or could stand on its own, depending on the needs of those conducting the search. Questions would be asked about the need for new, more efficient heating units, woodstoves, solar collectors, solar water heaters, passive solar remodelings, solar greenhouses, etc. Other questions would ask if respondents could convert present use of imported energy to locally-derived energy and how much they would be willing to spend to do this.

The Commercial Energy Market Search would ask similar questions of business and industry with the addition of options such as waste heat recovery and use, water recycling, co-generation units, etc.

Wellness Search

A Wellness Market Search could locate markets for preventive health care products and services both among consumers and in the industrial and commercial sector. A Wellness Market Search aimed at consumers in a zone would identify the need, desire and market for preventive health care products such as exercise equipment,

self-monitoring devices, medical equipment for use in the home (e.g., blood pressure cuffs, examination scopes), and services such as aerobic classes, exercise instruction, nutrition counseling, self-care instructional classes, etc.

A survey geared toward businesses would determine the need for implementation of employee fitness programs, exercise facilities and equipment, jogging trails, nutritional consulting services, stress management workshops, facilities for cycling commuters, stop smoking programs, etc.

Information such as this would give local health care providers, entrepreneurs and others the information needed to start up and expand operations in preventive rather than curative directions.

Health Network Inventory

The Health Network Inventory consists of a survey of a community's health resources. It is designed to support "lay healers" who deal with health problems before professional help is sought. It is designed for a small community or neighborhood, and first asks the question, "Who among your friends and neighbors do you ask for help before deciding whether you need to consult a professional health worker?" Through follow-up training and education aimed at the identified lay healers, this program can play a major role in the health care regeneration process of a community. The inventory will foster and promote more preventive practices and self-care. It will encourage people to take care of each other and themselves.

A second component of a Health Network Inventory is a listing of self-help mutual aid and support groups in the community, for example, single parents groups, alcoholics annonymous, La Leche League. These would be entered into a computerized database and continually updated to support regenerative wellness. This database could support a self-help telephone hot line in a regeneration center.

The prospects for regeneration are vast. Regeneration is a message and strategy whose success in bearing fruit depends primarily on markets and resources in a given region and on the entrepreneurial skills and desires of the business community. It does not depend on the international banking community. Regeneration presents a method for local groups to increase the vitality of the local economy.

The Regeneration Project welcomes the prospect of working with others. The regenerative approach can make communities, cities, and regions thrive by utilizing readily-available

resources, local talent and capacities to build new economic strength. We invite you to become a partner in regeneration. Please contact us for further information.

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